



Town of Ashland, Massachusetts

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Rob Scherer, Chairman
Steve Mitchell, Vice Chairman
Yolanda Greaves, Clerk
Joseph J Magnani, Jr., Selectman

December 5, 2018

The Honorable Ajit V. Pai
Federal Communications Commission
455 12th Street, Southwest
Washington, DC 20544

Dear Chairman Pai,

We write to express our concern about and disapproval of the proposals and tentative conclusions set forth in the FCC's September 25 Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making in *Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984 as Amended by the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992*, MB Docket 05- 311.

We are a community of 16,000 + residents located 25 miles west of Boston. Our local Community Media Center, WACA TV, is always very responsive to our requests for coverage of all our meetings and special forums. The staff of our Media Center is very professional, always providing quality productions that are top notch.

The PEG Media Center in Ashland, MA, provides our residents the ability to stay informed on what is happening in town government. The PEG Center (WACA) covers all of our Selectmen, School Committee, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Board of Health meetings as well as our Annual, and Special Town Meetings and any presentations and forums that are requested of them.

Residents have the opportunity to learn what is happening in our Town which allows them to better understand all the workings of our government and helping them make educated and informed votes at Town Meeting and our Annual Town Elections.

WACA also covers all sporting events in our schools as well as all the special events in our students lives such as graduations, class day, school concerts and many other events which can be viewed by families who are unable to attend in person.

WACA has provided coverage of our Annual Town Pride Day, known as Ashland Day, for the last 30 years. They also record the concerts which take place at our local Park during the summer months. WACA also covers annual events such as the Halloween Parade for our young residents and their families, the Holiday Lighting Ceremony and so much more. The community looks forward to viewing all these events thanks to WACA.

Our local church has been broadcasting their Sunday worships for decades on WACA. Through this effort, members of their congregation who are unable to attend services in person can view from their homes on WACA.

WACA also boasts an award-winning news program, Around the Clock, which covers all the happenings in and around our town including coverage of theater productions and concerts both locally and in Boston. Most importantly, it highlights a recap of our Selectmen meetings to keep the residents informed. Another feature of the news show is the interviews with town department heads, so residents can put a face to the people who are doing the day to day work in our government.

WACA also allows any resident to produce their own programming. They show sports talk shows, cooking shows, programs from the business community to inform their viewers on the best practices in running their businesses.

This local presence enables the residents of Ashland to watch uniquely local programming about their community and local events and issues of interest to them. And that was the intent of the PEG provisions of the 1984 Cable Act – to enhance local voices, serve local community needs and interests, and strengthen our local democracy. By defining “franchise fee” in an overly broad fashion to include “in-kind” support, the FCC’s proposals will shift the fair balance between cable franchising authorities and cable operators and will force communities to choose between franchise fees and PEG channels, — something that was never the intent of the Act.

We appreciate your consideration and hope you will protect PEG channels in our community and others by choosing not to adopt many of the proposals in the Further Notice.


Sincerely,



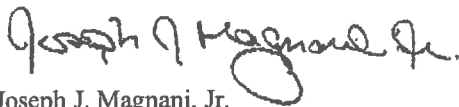
Robert Scherer, Chair
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Board of Selectmen

CC: The Honorable Michael O’Rielly, Commissioner
The Honorable Brendan Carr, Commissioner
The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner